

On Criticisms Made from Time to Time, on How the Association's Business Is Conducted.

—From time to time, one hears the criticism so often made not only in our own but in many other organizations, that only the members who hold office seem to know what is going on. In reply, it can be pointed out that, if such be the case, then it may be due to the fact that those members who are elected to office make it their special business to read the minutes and reports of committees, so that they may more fully be able to understand, and so better solve the problems facing the Association. None would more truly welcome the wholehearted interest and coöperation of all members in the work of the State Association than its officers who are constantly alert in trying to acquaint themselves with the opinions of their fellow members who have elected them to the positions they hold.

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Council Business Is Not "Slated."—Let no member, then, of the California Medical Association think for a moment that, because the minutes chronicle only brief statements on each item, the business matters which have a place on a Council docket are slated beforehand for this, that or the other action, or that decisions are arrived at without discussion, or that, at times, radical differences of opinion are not given expression. If the votes as recorded so often state that no opposing ballots were cast, that means only that in the discussions which took place between the councilors, whatever differences of opinion may have existed were ironed out, and that when the vote was called for, all had come to a unanimous opinion on the course of action to be approved. This is, after all, what one would expect from colleagues of long experience in organization work having broad, personal knowledge of the Association's problems and needs.

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Criticisms and Suggestions Are in Order and Are Welcomed.

—As has been stated by officers and councilors at the visitation conferences with component county societies, points of view and criticisms on policies and the proceedings are, and at all times, most cordially invited. In the last analysis, the California Medical Association stands as an exponent of scientific medicine, for the good reason that scientific medicine promotes the health, and thus, indirectly, the material and other welfare of the citizens of California; and as such an exponent and sponsor—as in all other professional and vocational guilds and groups—its members have learned that through organization and united effort, the individual and collective aspirations of the members of the medical profession are far more apt to be realized.

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The Organized, Scientific Medical Profession Is Responsible in Large Part for Low Morbidity and Mortality Rates: Thus Promoting the Material Prosperity of the Nation.—And let it not be forgotten, no matter who may say and what to the contrary, that if, in the United

States, there were not in existence a strong national medical organization with equally efficient constituent state associations, and up and doing component county medical societies, the standards of practice of the healing art, in so far as they relate to non-sectarian physicians and surgeons, would long before now, in more ways than one, have fallen to a low level.

For, believe it or not, the public health standards of the United States, with their lower morbidity and mortality rates, as compared with those of European countries (in spite of the presumable benefits of compulsory health insurance in these lands) are, and have been due in no small part to the influence and work—professional and, at times, altruistic-professional—which the members of the medical profession, in every part of the Union, and down to its almost smallest part, have generously given to the betterment of the physical, and so, indirectly, to the material and other welfare of lay fellow citizens. Ours is a noble guild, in which every member, legally accredited, may find opportunities without end to be of real and oftentimes vital service to those who come to him in hours of need.

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In Union There Is Strength.—May we not, then, one and all remember that if we can be of service individually, we can also, each of us, be of greater service if we act collectively. Wherefore the need of such organizations as the California Medical Association and its component county medical societies, and why every physician who honors his calling should give whole-hearted support to organized medicine.

APPELLATE COURT DECISION IN KERN COUNTY HOSPITAL CASE LAYS FOUNDATION FOR A PROPOSED INITIATIVE LAW TO OPEN COUNTY HOSPITALS

Full Opinion of Appellate Court Was Printed in March Issue.—When, on page 189 of the March issue, this journal printed in full the opinion of the Appellate Court of the Fourth California District, editorial comment upon the decision was made on page 146, and later, on page 253 of the April number. The California Supreme Court decided against the appeal from the Appellate Court's decision, thus emphasizing the force of the provisions of the state constitution which govern the expenditure of public moneys.

As was stated in the comments above referred to, some of the language used in the Appellate Court decision, in so far as it referred to conditions under which certain classes of non-indigent patients could be admitted to county hospitals, might, in the opinion of many physicians, have been clarified still more. On the whole, however, the court's opinion was in line with the points of view held by most licensed practitioners of medicine and surgery practicing in California; although it certainly was far from acceptable to the Board of Supervisors of Kern County and of the other counties who supported them through *amici curiae*, in the appeal that was taken to the Supreme Court.

Kern County Supervisors and Their Supporters Propose a Constitutional Amendment: To Open County Hospitals to Both Indigent and Non-Indigent Citizens.—Witness in this connection, the following excerpts from *The Bakersfield Californian* of April 4, 1936:

PETITIONS DEMAND VOTE ON KERN AND STATE
HOSPITAL ISSUE

Hospitalization on Pay Basis Is Urged By Group

Petitions asking that a proposed change in the Constitution of California, which would allow county hospitals to accept non-indigent patients, be submitted to the voters are being circulated throughout California by members of various civic, labor and farm organizations, it was learned today. The petitions have their origin in Kern County, where the Kern General Hospital Protective League has led the state-wide fight for public hospitalization in county hospitals.

MANY IN FAVOR

Thousands of signatures already have been affixed to the petitions, attesting the favor with which the proposed initiative measure is viewed by the electors, according to proponents of the move.

The Attorney-General has summarized the proposed measure as follows:

Establishment and maintenance of hospitals for pay patients by political subdivision. Initiative constitutional amendment. Authorizes the governing body of any city, county, or city and county, to establish and maintain a hospital for the care and treatment of any resident thereof whether an indigent or non-indigent, and to enact rules prescribing the rates to be charged each resident, other than indigents, for hospital services and supplies.

THEME OF PETITIONS

The petitions are addressed to the Secretary of State of the State of California, and read:

We, the undersigned, registered qualified electors of the State of California, residents of Kern County, present to the Secretary of State this petition and hereby propose an amendment to the Constitution of the State of California by adding Section 21 to Article XI thereof, to read as hereinafter set forth in full, and petition that the same be submitted to the electors of the State of California for their adoption or rejection at the next succeeding general election or as provided by law.

The petitions then continue and set forth in technical terms the proposed section as interpreted above by the Attorney-General.

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The Proposed Law Would Be an Amendment to the Constitution of the State of California.—If the proposed constitutional amendment, title printed above, is to have a place on the November, 1936, ballot, a total of 186,000 validated names of voters must be attached to its initial petition, and these are required to be in the hands of the Secretary of State at least 110 days before the November, 1936, election. Under existing economic conditions and with the present temper of many voters, it is quite possible that the number of signatures needed may be secured. If so, the members of the medical profession will have before them, in the months up to the November election, a real and serious task. Of that, however, more later on, in case the initiative petition actually finds a place on the November ballot.

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Component County Societies and Legislative Candidates.—In the meantime, it is to be hoped that component county societies will be fully alert to their responsibilities prior to, and in the near-

at-hand primary elections, and that members throughout the State will give consideration and support only to those legislative candidates, for either Senate or Assembly, who are known to have sound opinions on public health matters. Physicians are citizens and taxpayers. They owe it to themselves, in virtue of their special qualifications and calling, to inform their lay fellows, in proper, diplomatic fashion, concerning the importance of electing only those senatorial and assembly candidates whose past records indicate that they will support sane and legitimate public health measures. This is our immediate duty. And it should be remembered that in California, even though the large cities have a preponderance of power in the lower house or Assembly, the smaller and rural counties are in position to exercise as great or even greater legislative influence, because of their larger proportion of state senators.

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Component County Societies Have an Immediate Duty Facing Them.—The members of every component county society, and the officers especially, thus have in all this matter a serious and important obligation. Now is the time, therefore, to delegate to standing or special committees the work of contacting legislative candidates so that the information so gained may be given, not only to fellow physicians, but to patients and to those other citizens who likewise have the welfare of the State and its many economic, social welfare and public health activities truly at heart.

MEDICAL HISTORY THAT IS NOT HISTORY: COMMENT ON A LAY JOURNAL'S MISSTATEMENT OF CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

April 20 Issue of "Time" Discourses, Not Learnedly but Otherwise, on Medicine.—The weekly magazine *Time*, in the "Medicine" department of its issue for April 20, 1936, has as an opening article, "Pre-Convention [A. M. A.] Problems," in which the California Medical Association and the names of several of its members are mentioned. Every sentence of the third and fourth paragraphs may be pronounced a glaring misstatement of fact—whether made through ignorance, or by intention, we do not know.

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The First and Second Paragraphs.—The opening paragraph is as follows:

The American Medical Association will meet in Kansas City next month. Some seven thousand United States doctors will attend that annual convention. But only 172 members, delegates for the 101,754 American Medical Association members, will have anything authoritative to say, and that only between the authoritative gavel bangings of the Speaker of the House of Delegates, 70-year-old Dr. Nathan Bristol Van Etten of the Bronx.

The second paragraph, referring to the annual reports in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, quotes some of Secretary Olin West's reports on certain American Medical Association work.